Organic Production Requirements: Animal Husbandry

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3.3 ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

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3.3.1 Animal Husbandry Management

- **General Principles**
- Management techniques in animal husbandry should be governed by the physiological and ethological needs of the farm animals in question. This includes:
  - That animals should be allowed to conduct their basic behavioural needs.
  - That all management techniques, including those where production levels and speed of growth should be concerned, for the good health and welfare of the animals.

- **Recommendations**
- For welfare reasons the herd or flock size should not adversely affect the behavioural patterns of the animal.
Standards

3.3.1.1. The certification programme shall ensure that the management of the animal environment takes into account the behavioural needs of the animals and provides for:

- Sufficient free movement
- Sufficient fresh air and natural daylight according to the needs of the animals
- Protection against excessive sunlight, temperatures, rain and wind according to the needs of the animals
- Enough lying and/or resting area according to the needs of the animal. For all animals requiring bedding, natural materials shall be provided.
- Ample access to fresh water and feed according to the needs of the animals
- Adequate facilities for expressing behaviour in accordance with the biological and ethological needs of the species.
- No compounds used for construction materials or production equipment shall be used which might detrimentally affect human or animal health.
3.3.1.2. All animals shall have access to open air and/or grazing appropriate to the type of animal and season taking into account their age and condition, to be specified by the certification programme.

- The certification programme shall allow exceptions in cases where:
  - The specific farm or settlement structure prevents such access provided animal welfare can be guaranteed.
  - Areas where feeding of animals with carried fresh fodder is a more sustainable way to use land resources than grazing, provided animal welfare is not compromised.
  - Restrictions shall always include a time limit which shall be set for each exception.
  - Poultry and rabbits shall not be kept in cages.
  - Landless animal husbandry systems shall not be allowed.

3.3.1.3. When the natural day length is prolonged by artificial lighting, the certification programme shall prescribe maximum hours respective to species, geographical considerations and general health of animals.

3.3.1.4. Herd animals shall not be kept individually.

- The certification programme may allow exceptions, e.g., male animals, smallholdings, sick animals and those about to give birth.
3.3.2 Length of Conversion Period

- **General Principles**
  - The establishment of organic animal husbandry requires an interim period, the conversion period.

- **Recommendations**
  - The whole farm, including livestock, should be converted according to the standards set out in this document. Conversion may be accomplished over a period of time.
  - Replacement poultry should be brought onto the holding at the start of the production cycle.
• **Standards**

  - **3.3.2.1.** Animal products may be sold as "product of organic agriculture" only after the farm or relevant part of it has been under conversion for at least twelve months and provided the organic animal production standards have been met for the appropriate time.

  - **3.3.2.2.** The certification programme shall specify the length of time by which the animal production standards shall be met. With regard to dairy and egg production, this period shall not be less than 30 days.

  - **3.3.2.3.** Animals present on the farm at the time of conversion may be sold for organic meat if the organic standards have been followed for 12 months.
3.3.3 Brought-in Animals

- **General Principles**
  - All organic animals should be born and raised in the organic holding.

- **Recommendations**
  - Organic animal husbandry should not be dependent on conventional raising systems.
  - When trading or exchanging livestock, it should preferably take place between organic farms or as part of a long term cooperation between specific farms.
3.3.3.1. When organic livestock is not available, the certification programme shall allow brought-in conventional animals according to the following age limits:

- 2 day old chickens for meat production
- 18 week old hens for egg production
- 2 week old for any other poultry
- Piglets up to six weeks and after weaning
- Calves up to 4 weeks old which have received colostrum and are fed a diet consisting mainly of full milk.
- Certification programmes shall set time limits (not exceeding 5 years) for implementation of certified organic animals from conception for each type of animal.
• 3.3.3.2. Breeding stock may be brought in from conventional farms at an annual rate not exceeding 10% of the adult animals of the same species in the organic farm. For brought-in breeding stock the certification programme shall allow a higher yearly maximum than 10% in the following cases and with specific time limits:-
  • Unforeseen severe natural or manmade events
  • Considerable enlargement of the farm
  • Establishment of a new type of animal production on the farm
  • Small holdings
3.3.4 Breeds and Breeding

- **General Principles**
  - Breeds should be chosen which are adapted to local conditions.
  - Breeding goals should not be at variance with the animal’s natural behaviour and should be directed towards good health.

- **Recommendations**
  - Breeding shall not include methods which make the farming system dependent on high technological and capital intensive methods.
  - Reproduction techniques should be natural.
Standards

3.3.4.1. The certification programme shall ensure that breeding systems are based on breeds that can both copulate and give birth naturally.

3.3.4.2. Artificial insemination is allowed.

3.3.4.3. Embryo transfer techniques are not allowed in organic agriculture.

3.3.4.4. Hormonal heat treatment and induced birth are not allowed unless applied to individual animals for medical reasons and under veterinary advice.

3.3.4.5. The use of genetically engineered species or breeds are not allowed.
3.3.5 Mutilations

General Principles
- The animals’ distinctive characteristics should be respected.

Recommendations
- Species shall be chosen which do not require mutilation.
- Mutilations shall be allowed only in exceptional cases and shall be kept to the minimum.

Standards
- 3.3.5.1. Mutilations are not allowed. The certification programme shall allow the following exceptions:
  - Castrations
  - Tail docking of lambs
  - Dehorning
  - Ringing
  - Mulesing
- Suffering shall be minimised and anaesthetics used where appropriate.
3.3.6 Animal Nutrition

- **General Principles**
  - The livestock should be fed 100% organically grown feed of good quality.
  - All feed shall come from the farm itself or be produced within the region.
  - The diet shall be offered to the animals in a form allowing them to execute their natural feeding behaviour and digestive needs.

- **Recommendations**
  - The diet should be balanced according to the nutritional needs of the animals.
  - Products from the organic feed processing industry shall be used.
  - Colouring agents shall not be used in organic livestock production.
- **Standards**
  - 3.3.6.1. The certification programme shall draw up standards for feed and feed ingredients.
  - 3.3.6.2. The prevailing part (at least more than 50%) of the feed shall come from the farm unit itself or shall be produced in co-operation with other organic farms in the region.
  - The certification programme shall allow exceptions with regard to local conditions under a set of time limit for implementation.
  - 3.3.6.3. For the calculation purpose only, feed produced on the farm unit during the first year of organic management, may be classed as organic. This refers only to feed for animals which are themselves being reared within the farm unit and such feed may not be sold or otherwise marketed as organic (as 4.2.4).
3.3.6.4. Where it proves impossible to obtain certain feeds from organic farming sources, the certification programme shall allow a percentage of feed consumed by farm animals to be sourced from conventional farm. The maximum percentages of such feeds are given in the following table and shall be calculated in terms of the average diet for each animal category. These maximum percentages shall be followed the whole year round:

- Ruminants (dry matter intake) 15%
- Non-ruminants (dry matter intake) 20%
- These percentages will be reduced within 5 years to
  - Ruminants (dry matter) 10%
  - Non-ruminants (dry matter) 15%
- The certification programme shall allow exceptions to these percentages, with specific time limits and conditions in the following cases:
  - Unforeseen severe natural or man-made events
  - Extreme climatic or weather conditions
  - Areas where organic agriculture is in early stages of development
3.3.6.5. The following products shall not be included nor added to the feed given to farm animals:
- Synthetic growth promoters or stimulants
- Synthetic appetisers
- Preservatives, except when used as a processing aid
- Artificial colouring agents
- Urea
- Farm animal by-products (e.g. abattoir waste) to ruminants
- Droppings, dung or other manure (all types of excreta) even if technologically processed
- Feed subjected to solvent (e.g. hexane), extraction (soya and rape seed meal) or the addition of other chemical agents
- Pure amino acids
- Genetically engineered organisms or products thereof
- This covers both organic and conventional feeding stuffs.
3.3.6.6. Vitamins, trace elements and supplements shall be used from natural origin when available in appropriate quantity and quality.

The certification programme shall define conditions for use of vitamins and minerals from synthesised or unnatural sources.

3.3.6.7. All ruminants shall have daily access to roughage.

3.3.6.8. The following fodder preservatives shall be used:
- Bacteria, fungi and enzymes
- By-products of food industry (e.g. molasses)
- Plant based products
- Synthetic chemical fodder preservatives shall be allowed in special weather conditions. The certification programme shall specify conditions for use of substances from synthesised or unnatural sources e.g. acetic, formic and propionic acid, vitamins and minerals.
3.3.6.9. The certification programme shall set minimum weaning times taking into account the natural behaviour of the relevant animal species.

3.3.6.10. Young stock from mammals shall be raised using systems which rely on organic milk, preferably from their own species.

In emergencies the certification programme shall allow the use of milk from nonorganic farming systems or dairy based milk substitutes so long as they do not contain antibiotics or synthetic additives.
3.3.7 Veterinary Medicine

- **General Principles**
  - Management practices should be directed to the wellbeing of animals, achieving maximum resistance against disease and preventing infections.
  - Sick and injured animals shall be given prompt and adequate treatment.
- **Recommendations**
  - Natural medicines and methods, including homeopathy, ayurvedic, unani medicine and acupuncture, shall be emphasized.
  - When illness does occur the aim should be to find the cause and prevent future outbreaks by changing management practices.
  - Where appropriate, the certification programme should set conditions based on the farm's veterinary records to minimize the use of medicines.
  - The certification programme should make a list of medicines specifying the withholding periods.
Standards

3.3.7.1. The well-being of the animals is the primary consideration in the choice of illness treatment. The use of conventional veterinary medicines is allowed when no other justifiable alternative is available.

3.3.7.2. Where conventional veterinary medicines are used, the withholding period shall be at least double the legal period.

3.3.7.3. Use of the following substances is prohibited:
   - Synthetic growth promoters
   - Substances of synthetic origin for production, stimulation or suppression of natural growth
   - Hormones for heat induction and heat synchronisation unless used for an individual animal against reproductive disorders, justified by veterinary indications

3.3.7.4. Vaccinations shall be used only when diseases are known or expected to be a problem in the region of the farm and where these diseases cannot be controlled by other management techniques. The certification programme shall define conditions for such cases.

- Legally required vaccinations are allowed.
- Genetically engineered vaccines are prohibited.
3.3.8 Transport and Slaughter

- **General Principles**
  - Transport and slaughter should minimize stress to the animal. Transport distance and frequency should be minimized.
  - The transport medium should be appropriate for each animal.

- **Recommendations**
  - Animals should be inspected regularly during transport.
  - Animals should be watered and fed during transport depending on weather conditions and duration of the transport.
  - Stress to the animal shall be minimized, especially taking into consideration:
    - Contact (by eye, ear or smell) of each animal with dead animals or animals in the killing process
    - Existing group ties
    - Resting time to release stress
  - Each animal shall be stunned before being bled to death. The equipment used for stunning should be in good working order. Exceptions can be made according to cultural practice. Where animals are bled without prior stunning this should take place in a calm environment.
Standards

3.3.8.1. Throughout the different steps of the process there shall be a person responsible for the well-being of the animal.

3.3.8.2. Handling during transport and slaughter shall be calm and gentle. The use of electric sticks and such instruments are prohibited.

3.3.8.3. The certification programme shall set slaughter and transportation standards that will take into consideration:

- Stress caused to the animal and person in charge
- Fitness of the animal
- Loading and unloading
- Mixing different groups of animals or animals of different sex
- Quality and suitability of mode of transport and handling equipment
- Temperatures and relative humidity
- Hunger and thirst
- Specific needs of each animal
• 3.3.8.4. No chemical synthesized tranquillizers or stimulants shall be given prior to or during transport.

• 3.3.8.5. Each animal or group of animals shall be identifiable during all steps.

• 3.3.8.6. Where the transport is by axle, the journey time to the slaughterhouse shall not exceed eight hours.

• Certification programmes may grant exceptions on a case to case basis.
3.3.9 Bee Keeping

- **General Principles**
  - The collection area should be organic and/or wild and should be as varied as possible to fulfill the nutritional needs of the colony and contribute to good health.
  - The feed supplied should be fully organic.
  - Bee keeping is considered to be part of animal husbandry. The general principles therefore also apply to bee keeping.

- **Recommendations**
  - The feeding of colonies shall be seen as an exception to overcome temporary feed shortages due to climatic conditions.
  - The foundation comb should be made from organic wax.
  - When bees are grown in wild areas, consideration should be taken of the indigenous insect population.
Standards

3.3.9.1. Hives shall be situated in organically managed fields and/or wild natural areas.

Hives shall not be placed close to fields or other areas where chemical pesticides and herbicides are used.

Exceptions can be made by certification bodies on a case to case basis.

3.3.9.2. Feeding shall only take place after the last harvest before the season when no foraging feed is available.

3.3.9.3. Each bee hive shall primarily consist of natural materials. Use of construction materials with potentially toxic effects is prohibited.
3.3.9.4. Persistent materials may not be used in beehives where there is a possibility of permeation of the honey and where residues may be distributed in the area through dead bees.

3.3.9.5. Wing clipping is not allowed

3.3.9.6. Veterinary medicine shall not be used in beekeeping.

When working with the bees (e.g. at harvest) no repellent consisting of prohibited substances shall be used.
3.3.9.7. For pest and disease control and for hive disinfection the following products shall be allowed:

- caustic soda
- lactic, oxalic, acetic acid
- formic acid
- sulphur
- etheric oils
- bacillus thuringiensis
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